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SERMON
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KENTISH

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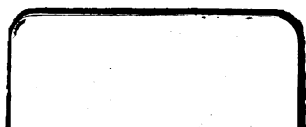
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THE ACCOMPLISHED TEACHER OF RELIGION :

A

SERMON,

PREACHED AT

THE NEW MEETING-HOUSE, BIRMINGHAM,

NOVEMBER 22, 1829,

ON OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF

THE REV. THOMAS BELSHAM,

BY

JOHN KENTISH.

I esteem it as no small felicity of my life, that I have been preserved to give this testimony of gratitude and affection to the memory of my tutor and my friend.

KIPPIS.

BIRMINGHAM:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY JAMES BELCHER AND SON ;

SOLD IN LONDON

BY R. HUNTER, ST. PAUL'S CHURCH YARD.

1830.

Παρα ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ, το αγαθὸν διδασκάλου, σχεῖν.

Marc. Anton.

The motives which induced me to prepare and deliver the following Discourse, are stated in the introductory paragraph: the same motives, strongly enforced by a request that I would "print and publish" it, occasion it to appear before the world.

To the Gentlemen who have made this request, and who are "desirous of thus recording their admiration of the public character, and private excellence, of the late Rev. Thomas Belsham, and their grateful recollection, as well of his eminent services in the cause of Christian Truth, as of the interest he uniformly evinced in behalf of the New Meeting Society, in Birmingham," THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED WITH UNFEIGNED SYMPATHY, AFFECTION AND ESTEEM.

January 22, 1830.

A

S E R M O N,

&c. &c.

DANIEL XI. 33.

——— **THEY THAT UNDERSTAND AMONG
THE PEOPLE, SHALL INSTRUCT MANY.**

EVEN had the interesting relations, in which I was once placed with the venerable man, whose decease occasions this discourse, failed of calling from me such an expression of the affectionate esteem and gratitude, with which I cherish the remembrance of him, other and more important reasons would, nevertheless, have existed for my thus speaking to you of his character and labours. His intimate friendship with the celebrated Christian philosopher, who formerly was a pastor of your

B

society, his prompt and able vindication of the motives, and of some of the writings, of that distinguished individual, his uniform sympathy with you as a congregation, the kindness, zeal and talent, with which he engaged in the first services conducted within this house of prayer, the delight and, I trust, the substantial advantage, with which, at different intervals, you have here listened to his instructive voice, and the intercourse which many of you had with him in private life, would not have permitted me to be silent. Still more, when I think on his station and influence, I say not merely in our own churches, but in a yet wider sphere, and on the honourable associations connected with his name by all the friends of learning and inquiry, of civil and religious freedom, and of human improvement, I feel that, arduous as is the undertaking, I am required to attempt a sketch, however feeble, of his life and favourite employments, of his studies, attainments, virtues, and signally useful efforts for the greatest welfare of mankind. Possessed of eminent knowledge and *understanding*, among his contemporaries, he has *instructed many*: nor, I

presume, will he cease to instruct us, by means of those monuments and records of his thoughts, which he has either laid before the world or prepared for publication.

THE REVEREND THOMAS BELSHAM was born, in 1750, at Bedford. Talents and literature, and—a far nobler honour—sincere piety, characterised his family: and, in his earliest years, he received the best impressions under the parental roof.* When suffering, at a very tender age, from the attacks of a malignant disease, he was observed, with inexpressible pleasure, by one of his nearest relatives, to give proof of that profoundly devotional spirit, ever thankful, and ever submissive, which grew with his growth.† After being placed, for his grammar learning, under a teacher of considerable accuracy and elegance, he entered, in 1766, at the Protestant Dissenting Academy at Daventry, then superintended by Dr. Ashworth. Between that judicious and indefatigable tutor and his pupil a warm, reciprocal affection subsisted. Every branch of academical education

* Appendix. [No. I.]

† Appendix. [No. II.]

was cultivated by Mr. Belsham with success: and, as the effect of his superior proficiency, talents and good conduct, he was soon appointed assistant-tutor in logic, mathematics, and natural philosophy. While thus situated and employed, it was his advantage to number among his fellow-students, and, I believe, among his pupils, some individuals, whose friendship he enjoyed through the remainder of his days, and who, happily, yet survive to adorn professional or civil life, and to bless those around them.

In 1778, and on the resignation of the Rev. Thomas Urwick,* he became the pastor of a respectable congregation at Worcester. I have often heard him speak, with much thankfulness and animation, of his residence in that city, and of some remarkably excellent persons, chiefly in advanced years, who were members of the society under his charge: and I know, on indisputable authority, that here he was esteemed, by all ranks of people, for his attainments, abilities, manners and ministerial

* Appendix. [No. III.]

qualifications, and was in habits of courteous intercourse with some learned dignitaries. But his settlement at Worcester, though thus happy, honoured and useful, was not destined to be of long duration.*

The Rev. Thomas Robins having been compelled, by the state of his health, to resign the tutorship in divinity, and the care of the students, at Daventry, the trustees of the seminary naturally turned their attention to Mr. Belsham as his successor. They judged that no person was equally capable of filling the vacant situation. All the friends of the institution concurred in this opinion: and he, accordingly, obeyed the invitation that summoned him from his beloved and more private charge to a post of peculiar arduousness and responsibility. The hopes of the trustees were fully realized: and his generous disinterestedness had the reward which he sought. Mr. Belsham superintended the seminary at Daventry with credit and success even surpassing those of his excellent prede-

* Appendix. [No. IV.]

cessors. Never was the number of pupils, of every description, so large as during the eight years of his second residence there: never, I may confidently add, was instruction more ably communicated, and discipline so effectually maintained. For this statement I can appeal to some, whose observation and experience, I am persuaded, agree entirely with my own: and I could, with thankfulness, expatiate on a theme so tenderly pleasing, but for the limits, within which Time confines me.

It was owing to a very important change in Mr. Belsham's theological sentiments that he quitted Daventry; that he spontaneously relinquished a situation of no small eminence, because it was a situation of no small usefulness; that he bade farewell "to an affectionate congregation and a flourishing seminary of estimable pupils."* The transaction was conducted in a manner which reflected much credit on both the parties in it: the divinity tutor, as a man of high integrity and honour, could not have pursued a different course—the

* Appendix. [No. V.]

trustees of the Academy, as the faithful agents of the will that they executed, could not but accept his resignation; and, at the season of it's being sent, Mr. Belsham had no other prospect than that of passing the remainder of his life in private. At the same time, although these were his own views and expectations, there appeared little probability that learning, abilities, manners and virtues such as his would be allowed to languish in retirement.

By the earnest solicitations of the governors and tutors of an Academical Institution, which had been recently formed in the neighbourhood of the metropolis, he accepted an important station there; reading lectures on the elements of the Philosophy of the mind, on Ethics, and on Theology, and becoming the principal resident tutor. Within a few years, local causes produced the suspension of this seminary. Yet the effect was in no degree owing to Mr. Belsham, who, as I can bear my humble testimony, did all within his power for the good order and government of the College. When this Institution was suspended, he con-

tinued to reside in its vicinity, where he now filled a situation yet more valuable and conspicuous.

The migration of Dr. Priestley, in the spring of 1794, to the Western Continent, had left a vacancy in the pastorate of a highly respectable Christian Society at Hackney: and Mr. Belsham was unanimously appointed to the office. In this station he remained, until 1805, when, in succession to Dr. Disney,* he was chosen minister of the chapel in Essex-street. Having entered on a charge, which, for several reasons, was particularly dear to him,† he fulfilled its duties with exemplary reputation and distinguished acceptance, until his services were, some time since, interrupted, and, at length, wholly discontinued, by reason of the growing infirmities of age.

Of his concluding years it is not requisite to say more than that they were passed chiefly in a very agreeable retirement; a retirement cheered frequently by the presence of many

* Appendix. [No. VI.]

† Appendix. [No. VII.]

respectful, affectionate, grateful friends, and habitually by the resources of Religion, by an unshaken confidence in the designs of a faithful Creator, and a settled trust in the truth and in the promises of Christianity.* Not many months have flown away, since he showed, by a short literary composition, that when treating of a subject connected with his early and darling studies, he still possessed those powers of acute discrimination, clear expression and methodical arrangement, which had marked his days of health and vigour.† His last hours were tranquil. While nature was sinking, under repeated attacks, faith and devotion were triumphant. The broken words which fell from him, denoted that patience had it's perfect work, that memory and hope refreshed his soul; and in this state he gently fell asleep.

These memorials of him, although, unavoidably, imperfect, may serve to introduce some remarks on what he was as a Christian, a man, a tutor, a minister, and a writer. We

* Appendix. [No. VIII.] † Appendix. [No. IX.]

have glanced at the life, and, for ourselves and numbers besides, we mourn our loss, of a very *accomplished teacher of religion*. It was his office and his privilege to *instruct many*; and this, because he possessed no ordinary portion of that *understanding*,* (I use the term in it's most comprehensive import) without which, as he was profoundly sensible, no man is capable of communicating instruction in a wide circle, or with any superior effect.

The basis of his virtues, was laid in his deep, habitual and enlightened piety. None could attend with seriousness on his public services, or make themselves acquainted with his writings, without perceiving his fervent devotion to the Author of his being—his enlarged, adoring views of the Divine perfections, character, and government: but those who had the nearest access to him, such as many of his pupils and personal friends, were witnesses to genuine, impressive signs of it, which could not fall under the public eye, and, from the nature of them, forbid description. It is a

* Appendix. [No. X.]

subject, upon which, happily, I can speak with deliberate confidence, because I speak from my individual and repeated observation. He was a man of strong devotional sensibility, and, like some of those honoured kindred whom he survived, was extremely fond, through his childhood and youth, his manhood and his age, of the perusal and occasional recitation of Sacred Poetry.

Allied to this grand element of moral and religious worth was his benevolence; at once a principle and a feeling—copied from the purest models, and expressed in every possible way; by affectionate sympathy, and abundant generosity, by the most hospitable attentions to all who could have any claims upon his friendly notice, by a liberal support of valuable institutions, by the patronage of destitute merit, and the exercise of influence as well as bounty. The last act of his life, while any energy remained, was an act of the most seasonable kindness.*

* Appendix. [No. XI.]

Nor can I pass by, what indeed was conspicuous to every one who had any personal acquaintance with him, the courteous dignity of his manners. This flowed considerably from his cherished benevolence, from his kindly emotions, from his unaffected desire of receiving and giving pleasure. At the same time, it was, in part, the effect of his habits of good society and of an early, intimate and practical knowledge of it's regulations. Here, as in yet more important respects, he was a fine pattern to his brethren in the ministry, and to all his younger friends. Let them imitate what, I am aware, most of them had the discernment and the feeling to admire. Courtesy and decorum of manners, are, at least, expressions of Christian benevolence: I will add that they are among it's safeguards. Our late honoured friend had so studied the records of the Gospel, and so drank into it's spirit, as to be sensible that "Charity becometh not itself unseemly:" and his philosophic mind was so conversant with the laws of habit as to be impressed with the persuasion that, in some

instances, a neglect of the established forms of social intercourse may destroy the very essence of social love.

In Mr. Belsham we beheld an example of comprehension of thought and views, and of a soul self-governed, and fixed on lofty aims and objects: and these attainments were chiefly produced and aided by his Christian faith, which enabled him to manifest cheerfulness without levity, and to live in the exercise of sober reflection, without indulging to gloom. By his Christian Faith I mean, his hope of pardon, acceptance and immortality from the Divine Favour; a hope established on the death and the resurrection of the Founder of the Gospel. For nothing was he more remarkable than his firm and honest profession of what he deemed to be religious truth—with him that pearl above all price—and his equally inflexible opposition to what he judged prevailing errors: and, when we consider, on the one hand, the nature of his early attachments and connections, and his strong, though well-regulated taste for highly polished society, and

on the other hand, the peculiar circumstances, which led him to avow and teach what with many are very obnoxious tenets, and to impugn what numbers think Scriptural verities, we shall the better estimate his probity and disinterestedness. From his heart he abhorred false shame, and timid concealment and disguise, in matters of such awful import. No individual could more deeply feel, or more unequivocally testify, his sense of his obligation not to deny his Great Master before men. He refrained, at the same time, from all uncandid judgment of the motives and conduct of persons in a different situation from himself, and was the determined foe of rash and hasty censures.

His diligence in his preparations for his public duties was of no ordinary kind: nor could any thing but this habit, joined to a wise distribution and economy of the hours of each passing day, have enabled him to fulfil with so much punctuality and correctness his various engagements.

Of his intellectual qualities it may safely be pronounced that they were of a distinguished order. Nothing perhaps was so observable in those of his habits that were strictly *mental*, as his clearness of perception. His ideas were lucid, discriminative and excellently arranged; so that his knowledge was always at his command, and the perspicuity, the precision, accuracy and strength, with which he expressed himself, completely answered to the perspicuity of his views and judgment. In his power of making luminous statements and condensed representations both of his own thoughts and of those of other persons he surpassed almost every man - with whom it has been my lot to be acquainted. How signally useful this faculty was to himself, and to those with whom he conversed, or whom he in any way addressed, we can with readiness conceive.

His learning was very considerable and extensive: yet such was his admirable good sense, that he aspired not to the fame of an universal scholar, nor affected to possess

information upon subjects, which it had not been within his opportunities to study. The philosophy of the human mind, ethics and theology, in the most extensive range of those interesting and kindred sciences, were his favourite, his main, pursuits: his reading *there* was great; his knowledge correct, minute and valuable, beyond that of many of his contemporaries.

The office of a tutor in most seminaries of education, certainly in those which Mr. Belsham superintended, has two parts—the delivery of appropriate instruction and the exercise of faithful discipline. For his most exemplary fulfilment of his duty, under both these divisions of it, he will be remembered, by his surviving pupils, with no common gratitude, esteem and admiration. I could but inadequately describe from this place, nor would the attempt be proper, what he was as a lecturer; how regular and punctual, how intelligent, accurate, impartial, attractive, skilful and impressive—with what graceful ease and fluency, and what variety and aptness of

illustration he enlarged on his subjects and his text books—and with how much address, talent and knowledge of character he ascertained the proficiency of the several members of his classes! But are there not those of us, my brethren, who owe yet higher obligations to his memory? For he was most anxious that we should be “wise unto salvation:” and he laboured to inspire us with supreme love to God and Christ, and religious truth and goodness. Who, among that portion of my hearers, to whom I now immediately turn,—who of us—can forget what were justly styled his *devotional* lectures,* so calculated, under God’s blessing, to render us firm, yet conciliatory, pious and sober-minded, yet actively kind and useful? The mansion where I first and chiefly knew him, in the character of a tutor, was the abode of order and of concord: the rules of the house were impartially and wisely administered; and if, among our number, any deemed authority to have been excessive or misplaced, it was not long before our reflections made us fully sensible of our error. So,

* Appendix. [No. XII.]

I conceive, it will, usually, if not always, be, when the original or the delegated authority of a parent is lodged in capable hands, and exerted over ingenuous minds. I have noticed the fact, not only in grateful recollection of my honoured tutor, but, further, in the hope that the statement will not be altogether lost on my young friends of this society and circle.

As a preacher, Mr. Belsham was truly eminent. Witness those occasional and those collected sermons, which are either in your possession, or to which you have the means of ready access: witness, too, the numerous individuals, and among these many of you class, whose privilege it has been to have heard, at any time, the yet living teacher. Independently on the singular excellencies of his style and his arrangement, on his powers of happy illustration and forcible reasoning, this rare advantage belonged to his delivery, that it was exactly suited to the nature and the manner of his compositions. It was correct, grave, distinct, and expressive, on fit occasions, of genuine emotion; while it never

diverted the attention of the audience from the subject and the argument to the speaker. His eloquence therefore was the eloquence of thought and feeling; admitting no tinsel and glare, and no artificial pomp. Whatever topics he selected for his public addresses, he treated with his characteristic luminousness and talent—affording large stores of information within a narrow compass—and if, of late, the tenor of his preaching was more critical and controversial than might have suited every hearer, the peculiarity, we must remember, arose from the nature of his situation,* and the direction of his studies: nor did he lose sight of the devotional and practical uses, to which his themes of discourse might be applied.

It remains that I speak of him in the character of an author. Not that I profess to enumerate his works,† or to enlarge here on their several features and merits. Some notice should be taken, nevertheless, of the principal of them; for which purpose, they may be con-

* Appendix. [No. XIII.] † Appendix. [No. XIV.]

veniently ranged under the heads of *didactic* and *practical*, *controversial*, *expository*, and *biographical*.

Among those of his discourses that were preached on public occasions, and subsequently and separately printed, there are few which do not merit preservation: from one of them,* which, I am apprehensive, is now little known, but which perhaps is his most masterly performance of this and indeed of every class, I shall make two short extracts, illustrative of his vigorous, animated and impressive style.

Speaking of the influence of opinion upon character, the preacher asks—

“ Shall we say that all who embrace just and Scriptural principles of religion excel the rest of mankind in piety and virtue? I am sure that they ought: and I am happy to add that there are some characters which tower above the common level, whose excellence bears a uniform proportion to the excellence

* Appendix. [No. XV.]

of the principles upon which they are formed; and who exhibit to the world a striking example of that dignity and sublimity to which truth and virtue are capable of elevating the human mind. O that such examples were more frequent! But as the wisdom and goodness of Providence have placed men within the reach of influences, which in some degree counteract the natural effects of pernicious errors, so there are likewise contagions which may taint and vitiate the heart, which is in a considerable degree emancipated from the yoke of prejudice. And as in machines, unperceived obstructions will often diminish the effects which an accurate calculation of their powers would lead us to expect, so there are sometimes hidden causes which obstruct the influence of received principles in the mind; and it seldom happens that men are either so virtuous or so vicious as their speculative views would render them, if pursued to their just consequences."

Afterwards, in reference to the suppression of free inquiry, he remarks—

“What infinite mischiefs have resulted from the suppression of free inquiry, and from laying restraints upon opinions deemed pernicious, let the black records of persecution, let the bloody tribunals of the Inquisition declare; and let all her dark and cheerless dungeons reverberate the melancholy tale. For what valuable truth hath not at it's first promulgation been branded as pernicious, and judged worthy of penal restraint?”

Mr. Belsham's “Elements of the Philosophy of the human mind,” and his discourses on the “Evidences of the Christian Revelation,” were designed chiefly for the young. Persons however who have reached maturer life, must be extraordinary proficient in mental and in theological knowledge if they do not read both these works with pleasure and advantage. Of the author's characteristic qualities of intellect they are highly favourable examples.*

It was unavoidably his lot to come before the public as a controversial writer; and, for

* Appendix. [No. XVI.]

the most part, he appeared in that character with great credit and advantage. His earliest performance, of the kind, was a *Review* of the well known production of a justly admired senator and friend of suffering humanity, to whose pure intentions, benevolent efforts, and glowing eloquence his reviewer does ample justice, and pays the willing tribute of respect; while he animadverts, with masterly skill and intelligence, and with undeviating courtesy, on what he takes to be his errors in point of opinion, reasoning and statement. This volume alone would establish the reputation of Mr. Belsham as a candid, fair and able controversialist.

In some other discussions he was the same powerful defender of what he viewed as religious truth, and especially when he undertook the vindication of the unsullied fame of the illustrious man, with whom he had been linked in a truly Christian friendship.* But, in most of these controversies, the individuals on whose arguments he animadverted, or to

* Appendix. [No. XVII.]

whom he replied, had, unhappily, said, or insinuated, what sometimes called from him more severity of language than he might otherwise have employed. In the present imperfect state of theological knowledge within this country, there exists a necessity, it will be generally admitted, for occasional attack and defence: and if the laws of moderation are not observed, on the one side, with the utmost strictness, there is imminent danger of their not being uniformly and fully regarded on the other. It is a trial of temper and of feeling: yet the evils flowing from it are but transient; while the benefits of controversial discussions, if those discussions be undertaken by intelligent and capable men, are substantial and lasting. There is no grand department of knowledge, which has not thus been advanced, or which could have been equally advanced by other means; and how can Theology be an exception? If therefore, in some few cases, I should have rejoiced to have discovered in the polemical writings of my venerable friend the perfect urbanity which marked his conversation, I must still be of

opinion that the candour and equity of motive, which his opponents claimed for themselves, should be allowed to *him*; and that all the disputants are to be judged of by the same rules—while we may see with regret, yet without astonishment, that none of them are quite exempted from “human passions.”

His excellent letters in defence of the perpetuity of infant baptism, ought, I think, to be ranked among his controversial productions; because, although they are not directed against the arguments of any one individual, in particular, they treat of a topic in respect of which the Christian world is far from being agreed.* Under the same head, and for the same reason, we may class his admirable volume entitled, “A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture doctrine concerning the person of Christ,” in the preface to which he describes the progress of his change of sentiment on that important subject, and the course of study, by means of which it was effected.†

* Appendix. [No. XVIII.] † Appendix. [No. XIX.]

To many, if not most, of those who now hear me, it, probably, is not unknown that he was the editor of the "Improved Version of the New Testament, upon the basis of Archbishop Newcome's New Translation." This was one of the happy fruits of the Unitarian Book Society in London, in 1791, of which, in conjunction with his friends Dr. Priestley and Mr. Lindsey, he was the founder, and which, in various ways, has been highly beneficial. To the *Improved Version*, which he superintended with great care, much praise is due. I have been no inattentive reader of the objections brought against it, and think them, with scarcely any exception, very ill considered. The performance richly merits the title of the "*Improved Version*," even had it no other claim than that of first giving to the public, in an English Translation, the text of the New Testament from the critical edition of a well known Lutheran divine.*

In 1822 Mr. Belsham published his elaborate Translation of the Epistles of Paul,

* Appendix. [No. XX.]

with an exposition and notes. It was the result of many years of study and diligent inquiry,* and has obtained approbation from men of considerable talent and erudition, who belonged not to his own communion. Indeed, not a few of the annotations, which he made on passages of Scripture, and of his deductions from them, are exactly such as fell from some of the greatest divines of the established church, in the last or the present century.† I do not, however, extend the remark to any opinions, which they delivered concerning the object of worship, and the personal rank of the Author and Finisher of our faith.

As, on the one hand, Mr. Belsham bowed to no human authority, when the question at issue was to be determined exclusively by the sense of the Scriptures, so, on the other hand, when the names of uninspired men were cited against him, and, especially when *numbers* were appealed to, as the test of truth, he felt more than solaced in his consciousness

* Appendix. [No. XXI.] † Appendix. [No. XXII.]

of his religious profession being established on the basis pointed out by his countryman, *Locke*, in the "Reasonableness of Christianity," and of his interpretation of the Sacred Volume being conducted on the principle, which that most valuable man has stated, defended, and exemplified.*

Mr. Belsham was a consistent and well informed *Protestant*, and, as became a man entitled to the appellation, he was uniformly the advocate of that legislative interference in behalf of his Catholic fellow-subjects, which he lived to see afforded.†

His "Memoirs of the late Rev. Theophilus Lindsey," show the versatility of his talents, and exhibit him to much advantage as a biographer. The subject was most congenial to his feelings. By the number of interesting anecdotes, with which the work abounds, the course of the narrative is considerably relieved and adorned. Some fine delineations of the characters of individuals, occur in these

* Appendix. [No. XXIII.] † Appendix. [No. XXIV.]

pages—faithful, engaging portraits of men, with whom he had lived in intimacy, and to some of whom he owed the highest obligations.*

To those individuals he is now joined. He, too, has finished his earthly race, his mortal pilgrimage. His life was long and eminently useful, and far happier than is the lot of many a sojourner in this world. Our loss of him cannot be soon or easily supplied. Yet from his tomb he calls on us to be followers of him, so far as he was a follower of Christ; so that we may share in the reward anticipated by him from the Divine Mercy in the covenant of the Gospel. Be it not *our* reproach, my brethren, that the wise and righteous—men of eminent *understanding* and goodness, the able, skilful *instructors* of many—perish, and we lay not their departure to our hearts. Obeying their instructions, animated by their examples, let us do all within our power, collectively and personally, for the interests of religious truth and virtue: nor may there ever be wanting among us (an object to which

* Appendix. [No. XXV.]

Our deceased friend was cordially devoted) intelligent and faithful servants of Christ, who shall be able ^{to} teach others also! If such, through the influences of Heaven, be, in any degree, the effect of this address, I shall be humbly thankful that I have presented you with some delineation of him; not indeed such as I wished to frame, but such as I was able.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

No. I.—p. 3.

The father of the subject of the foregoing Biographical Sketch, was *The Rev. James Belsham*, who received his academical instruction, from the Rev. John Alexander, at Stratford-upon-Avon, and, for some time, served a dissenting congregation at Newport Pagnel. This gentleman was the author of two Latin poems, of considerable merit—*Mors Triumphans* and *Canadia*: they were published separately; and copies of them are now extremely rare. Of *Canadia* a favourable account and specimen may be found in the vol. of the Month. Rev. for 1760, pp. 439, 440.

In his early years, Mr. Thomas Belsham must have been exposed to very favourable influences from the examples, counsels and society of other members of his family.—With Mr. Robins, who was a native of the vicinity of Bedford, he, probably, had formed an acquaintance, at the same period of his life. That excellent man

was much older than Mr. Belsham: nor does it appear that he ever sustained the office of an *assistant* tutor at Daventry.

The Rev. John French, who kept a *private school*, first at Wellingborough, and afterwards at Ware, was the accurate and elegant *teacher*, to whom I have referred. Mr. Thomas Belsham was his pupil, I think, in both those towns—assuredly, at Ware.

No. II.—p. 3.

This circumstance was incidentally communicated to me, some years since, on the authority of Mr. Belsham's third sister, the late Mrs. Timothy Kenrick, in whom were united the most valuable qualities of the understanding and the heart.

No. III.—p. 4.

Mr. Urwick, a native of Shrewsbury, was educated first at Northampton, under Dr. Doddridge, and subsequently at Glasgow. He became minister, successively, at Worcester, Narborough, and Clapham, where he died

in February, 1807. Mr. Urwick was a most amiable and estimable man; greatly respected and beloved in private and in public life.

No. IV.—p. 5.

I owe much of the information contained in this paragraph to the kindness of Mrs. Sarah Bache, of Birmingham, who, when young, was a resident at Worcester, and had the best opportunities of knowing the nature of Mr. Belsham's services there, his high reputation, and the strength of the attachment subsisting between himself and the people of his charge.

No. V.—p. 6.

This is Mr. Belsham's language in his Preface to the "Calm Inquiry, &c." p. viii. A deeply interesting narrative of the circumstances attending his resignation of his office at Daventry, will be found in his Memoirs of Mr. Lindsey, ch. x.

The trustees of Mr. Coward's Will, at that time, were The Rev. Thomas Tayler (who yet survives, January, 1830, in an extremely advanced and honourable old age),

The Rev. Dr. Rice Harris, The Rev. Thomas Urwick,
and Joseph Paice, Esq.

No. VI.—p. 8.

Dr. Disney was, for ten years, colleague with Mr. Lindsey, at Essex-street, and, for nearly twelve, his successor. Thus, the two first ministers of the chapel were individuals who had been exemplary and beneficed clergymen of the Church of England, and each of whom had offered a costly sacrifice on the altar of Christian Integrity and Truth.

Both Mr. Lindsey and Dr. Disney bade farewell, not merely to their respective livings, but to the sure prospect of further and of high ecclesiastical preferment. The connections of each of these disinterested men, were such as to have made this a certain result. In Dr. Disney's case, "the just claims of an infant family pleaded hard not to be neglected." At a subsequent period of his life, and long after the perplexities of his mind had ceased, I frequently saw him in the bosom of that family, and witnessed how amiable and estimable he was in domestic life, as well as in wider circles—how useful and intent on doing good ! He was a man of considerable activity and talent in public business ; and, on his removal from the world, he there left a vacancy, which many have particular reason to

deplore. I can never think nor speak of him without grateful, affectionate respect.

No. VII.—p. 8.

On this part of Mr. Belsham's history, I must refer to what he himself has left on record.—Memoirs of Mr. Lindsey, ch. x.

No. VIII.—p. 9.

I have here borrowed the sentiment and the language of Paley, at the end of his fine Dedication of his "Moral and Political Philosophy," to Bishop Edmund Law. Like that learned and studious Prelate, Mr. Belsham, in his theological labours, was governed by "a firm, and, I think, a just opinion, that whatever renders religion more rational, renders it more credible."

No. IX.—p. 9.

This paper, the subject of which is, "Dr. Priestley's System of materialism, mechanism and necessity," will be found in the Vol. of the Monthly Repository, &c. for 1829, p. 239.

No. X.—p. 10.

The nature and the essential limits of the preceding Discourse, did not permit me to represent the meaning and the connection of the passage by which it was introduced. It seems difficult to say, what particular era, or what body of persons, this prophecy regards. Some are of opinion (Bp. Newton's *Dissertations*, &c. 1758, Vol. ii. p. 239, &c.) that the words were intended to presignify "the primitive Christians, who, being dispersed every where, and preaching the Gospel in all the parts of the Roman empire, *instructed many*:" and this appears to me a good and probable interpretation. I perceive that Sir Isaac Newton, on Daniel, (1733) pp. 190, 191, gives the same interpretation, which occurs, also, in *Commentaries and Essays*, Vol. i. p. 490.

No. XI.—p. 11.

"The act of seasonable kindness," to which I make allusion, was that of addressing a most consolatory letter to a friend, who had recently become a widow, under circumstances particularly distressing.

No. XII.—p. 17.

See Orton's *Memoirs of Doddridge*, 2d ed. p. 97. and Kippis's *Life of Doddridge*, p. 83.

The devotional Lectures at Daventry, were delivered, once in two months, during the academical session, on the day preceding that appropriated to the administration of the Lord's supper.

No. XIII.—p. 19.

For a number of years, the sphere of Mr. Belsham's ministerial services, was, first, the immediate vicinity of the metropolis, and then the metropolis itself. The theological controversies of the day, naturally engaged, in an eminent degree, the attention of his searching mind: nor can we wonder that, on his removal to London especially, they often supplied him with the subjects of his discourses. A large number of his hearers at Essex-street, expected, and perhaps required, to be addressed on topics, that would not have been equally well adapted to the attainments, capacities, and taste, of a less informed and discriminating audience. Just in the same manner, during a part of the two preceding centuries, some very considerable *metropolitan* preachers frequently introduced into the pulpit themes suggested by the *Deistical* or by the *Protestant* controversy—then the reigning discussions among theological inquirers. This, too, they did, not only without blame, but with great credit and advantage: and it is remarkable, that the celebrated men, to whom I allude—the Tillotsons and Sherlocks of a former age—

were stationed in the very neighbourhood of the scene of the late public labours of my departed friend, and periodically spoke to auditors of the same description with many of the stated attendants on his ministry.

No. XIV.—p. 19.

What is not attempted in the Sermon, may, without impropriety, be undertaken in the Appendix. Here, therefore, I shall present my readers with a catalogue of Mr. Belsham's publications, arranged under distinct heads, and accompanied, occasionally, with a few brief notices :

(I.) DIDACTIC.

1. The evil nature and pernicious tendency of intemperate and misguided zeal; a Sermon preached at a meeting of Ministers, at Rothwell, in Northamptonshire, Oct. 4, 1775, 12mo.

This sermon is out of print. The subject of it, was, beyond doubt, suggested by some unhappy dissensions then subsisting among one class of Protestant Dissenters, at Northampton. In respect of those proceedings, to which Mr. Belsham pointedly, yet most judiciously, alludes, I have some interesting tracts in my possession. Let the veil of oblivion, and the mantle of forbearance, be thrown over all such *local* transactions.—The discourse

has great intrinsic excellence, and is far from being inapplicable to the state of our own times and country.

2. A Charge delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. Timothy Kenrick, at Exeter, July 28, 1785.

The substance of this charge was also delivered, during the summer of the same year, at the Ordination of the Rev. William Browne, at Wrexham.

3. A Charge delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. D. B. Jardine, at Bath, February 25, 1790.

4. The importance of Truth, and the duty of making an open profession of it; a Discourse delivered on the 28th of April, 1790, at the Meeting House, in the Old Jewry, London.

I enjoyed some of the best opportunities of marking the more than usual care, which Mr. Belsham bestowed on the arrangement and composition of this masterly Discourse: and it was my happiness to be one of the delighted hearers of it.

5. A Charge delivered at the Ordination of the Rev. William Field, of Warwick, July 12, 1790.

6. The importance of giving a proper education to the

Children of the poor, represented in a Sermon preached, at St. Thomas's, January 1, 1791.

7. Dishonest Shame the primary Source of the Corruptions of the Christian Doctrine: a Sermon preached, at Hackney, April 6, 1794.

This is a Sermon of no common excellence. It was written and delivered, on occasion of the preacher's undertaking the pastoral charge at Hackney: and it well deserves republication in a permanent form.

8. Knowledge the foundation of Virtue: a Sermon addressed to young persons, 1795.

It was preached originally at Hackney: the substance of it forms the concluding discourse in the volume on the evidences of Christianity.

9. Freedom of Inquiry, and Zeal in the Diffusion of Christian Truth: a Discourse delivered at Bristol, [before the Western Unitarian Book Society] July 9, 1800.

10. Reflections and Exhortations adapted to the state of the times: a Sermon [Thanksgiving] preached at Hackney, June 1, 1802.

11. The Study of the Scriptures recommended, in a

Discourse delivered at Newport, in the Isle of Wight, [before the Southern Unitarian Society] July 13, 1803.

12. The situation, the prospects, and the duties of Britons in the present crisis of alarm and danger: a Discourse [Fast] delivered [at Hackney] Oct. 19, 1803.

13. The character of the Christian Teacher delineated, and the means of forming it represented, in a Discourse delivered at Hackney [in professed recommendation of an Academical Institution at Exeter] Jan. 8, 1804.

14. Zeal and Fortitude in the Christian ministry illustrated and exemplified: a Discourse delivered at Hackney, April 8, 1804, on occasion of the death of the Rev. Joseph Priestley, L.L.D. F.R.S.

15. Adherence to Christian Truth recommended, in a Discourse delivered to the Unitarian Congregation at Hackney, May 5, 1805, upon the Resignation of the Pastoral Office in that Society.

16. A Discourse occasioned by the death of the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, delivered at the Unitarian Chapel in Essex-street, Oct. 12, 1806.

This Discourse reflects great credit on the talents, the sensibility and the patriotism of it's author. It is

characterised by animation, pathos and comprehensive thought, and highly deserves to be rescued from the usual lot of single Sermons.

17. The Providence of God over-ruling the issues of war and conquest: a Sermon [Fast] preached [at Essex-street] Feb. 25, 1807.

18. A Sermon, occasioned by the death of the Rev. Theophilus Lindsey, M.A. preached at the Chapel in Essex-street, Strand, Nov. 13, 1808.

19. The Year of Jubilee considered, in a Discourse delivered at the Unitarian Chapel in Essex-street, [on the completion of the fiftieth year of the reign of George III.] Oct. 22, 1809.

20. Uncorrupted Christianity unpatronized by the Great: a Discourse occasioned by the decease of the Duke of Grafton [at Essex-street, where the Duke of Grafton, who died March 14, 1811, had, through many preceding years, been a regular and serious worshipper] 1811.

21. The Christian Character exemplified, in a Discourse occasioned by the death of Mrs. Hannah Lindsey, 1812.

22. The Rights of Conscience asserted and defended, in a Discourse delivered in Essex-street Chapel on the Fast Day, February 5, 1812.

Some discussions on which the Public Mind was then and has been subsequently intent, appear to have dictated the subject of this discourse.

23. The sufferings of Unitarians in former times urged as a ground of thankfulness for their recovered liberties: a Discourse preached in Essex-street Chapel, [on occasion of the Unitarian Relief Bill] July 25, 1813.

24. The progress of intellectual, moral and religious improvement during the present reign, represented, in a Discourse delivered before the Unitarian [Book] Society at Essex-street Chapel, on Thursday, March 31, 1814.

25. The prospect of perpetual and universal peace: a Thanksgiving Sermon, preached at Essex-street Chapel, July 3, 1814.

26. Reflections on the sudden death of a Young Minister: a Funeral Discourse [at Essex-street] for the late Rev. Thomas Biggin Broadbent, M. A. 1817.

27. The present state of religious parties in England: a Discourse delivered at Essex-street Chapel, May 17, 1818.

28. **Reflections upon the death of Sir Samuel Romilly:** in a Discourse delivered at Essex-street Chapel, Nov. 8, 1818.

29. **Two Sermons:** the first, on the love of Truth, including a summary of the lectures delivered at Essex-street Chapel; the second, on the benefits arising from Theological Controversy: preached in Essex-street Chapel, Nov. 1822; introductory to the course of Lectures for the season. 1823.

30. **Discourses doctrinal and practical,** delivered in Essex-street Chapel. 2 vols. 8vo. 1826, 1827.

31. **Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind,** and of Moral Philosophy. To which is prefixed, A Compendium of Logic. 1801.

32. **A Summary View of the Evidence and Practical Importance of the Christian Revelation,** in a series of Discourses, 1807.

There is a second edition of this work.

(II.) CONTROVERSIAL.

1. **A Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise,** entitled "*A Practical View of the prevailing religious System of professed Christians, &c.*" 1798.

Of the "Review, &c." a second edition was published in 12mo. in 1800 [by the London Unitarian Book Society] and a third, in 1813, in 8vo, with corrections, &c. by the author.

2. A serious Caution against Popular Errors: a Discourse [delivered at Hackney and] addressed to young persons. 1801.

3. The Right and Duty of Unitarian Christians to form Separate Societies for Religious Worship: a Sermon preached at Birmingham, July, 1802, at the opening of the New Meeting-house.

4. The Progress of Error concerning the Person of Christ, represented in a Sermon delivered at the Unitarian Chapel in Essex-street, March 31, 1805, [on occasion of the writer's acceptance of the office of minister of that chapel.]

5. A Vindication of certain passages in a Discourse on occasion of the death of Dr. Priestley, in reply to the animadversions of the Rev. John Pye Smith.

6. The importance of Right Sentiments concerning the Person of Christ. Preached before the London Unitarian [Book] Society, April 10, 1806.

7. Letters upon Arianism, and other Topics of Meta-

physics and Theology, in Reply to the Lectures of the Rev. B. Carpenter. 1808.

8. A Calm Inquiry into the Scripture Doctrine, concerning the person of Christ. 1811. [A second edition has been published.]

9. An Address to the Inquirers after Christian Truth; in reply to the Extracts from Dr. Magee's [now Archbishop of Dublin] Book on Atonement and Sacrifice. 1813.

This Address, &c. was reprinted in the Monthly Repository of Theology and General Literature, Vol. viii. 489, &c. It bears the signature of *A Calm Inquirer after Revealed Truth*.

10. The Claims of Dr. Priestley in the Controversy with Bishop Horsley Re-stated and Vindicated, in Reply to the Animadversions of the Rev. Heneage Horsley. 1814.

In 1815, Mr. Belsham edited, in one volume, Dr. Priestley's "Tracts in Controversy with Bishop Horsley." To this volume he wrote the Preface. There are also Notes by the Editor.

11. Letters addressed to the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of London [the present Archbishop of Canter-

bury], in Vindication of the Unitarians from the Allegations of his Lordship.

12. A Letter to the Unitarian Christians in South Wales, occasioned by the Animadversions of the Right Rev. the Lord Bishop of St. David's [now of Salisbury]. 1816.

13. The Bampton Lecturer Reproved: being a Reply to the calumnious Charges of the Rev. C. A. Moysey, D. D. in his late Bampton Lectures against the Unitarians. 1819.

14. A Vindication of the New Translation and Exposition of the Epistles of Paul, from the Strictures in the 59th No. of the Quarterly Review. 1825.

15. A Letter to Lord Viscount Sidmouth on the subject of the Bill introduced by his Lordship into the House of Peers. 1811.

It was the almost unanimous judgment and feeling of the Protestant Dissenters that the Bill in question tended to restrict the Provisions of the Act of Toleration. Mr. Belsham thought otherwise: nor am I aware that he saw cause to alter his opinion, from which I still differ; while I honour his memory for the ingenuousness, with which, on all important occasions, he publicly declared his convictions. The result is well known: the Bill did not pass.

into a Law; and in the next Session of Parliament *Tolerance* was better defined and substantially enlarged.

16. Christianity pleading for the Patronage of the Civil Power, but protesting against the aid of Penal Laws: considered in three Sermons preached in Essex-street Chapel. 1820.

◆

The subject of this pamphlet, is in some degree akin to that of the last Article; and I therefore give it a place here. Certain recent and most unequitable and ill judged prosecutions of the venders of Tracts against Divine Revelation, were, as might be supposed, unequivocally censured by Mr. Belsham. He protested, accordingly, against the aid of Penal Laws in behalf of Christianity. At the same time, he seems to have been thoroughly persuaded that this Religion claims and requires a modified support and patronage from the civil power. Let his readers decide on the validity of his reasoning. For myself, I cannot admit it's justness: whether I consult the Christian Scriptures, and Ecclesiastical and Civil History, or look at passing events, I think that the Magistrate seriously injures both Religion and Civil Government, when he does more than afford *simple and equal protection to all classes of men*, be their religious tenets and worship what they may. Experience will, sooner or later, impress this truth upon the Public Mind: but to act in agreement with it, will call for no ordinary fortitude and wisdom.

17. A Plea for the Catholic Claims : a Sermon [Fast] preached at the Chapel in Essex-street, March 10, 1813.

This Sermon is classed among Mr. Belsham's *controversial* writings, only because the *claims* for which he so ably *pleads*, were, at that time, almost universally resisted. The fact is now very different; though, even yet, *mere numbers* would seem opposed to the relief which has been granted. It was most honourable to the late minister of Essex-street Chapel, that he thus stood forward, the earliest, I believe, among his brethren, and, certainly, not the least intrepid, in asserting, what I must be permitted to style, *the equal rights of conscience*.

18. A Plea for Infant Baptism : To which is annexed an Appendix, containing two forms of administering the Rite.

(III.) EXPOSITORY.

1. Reflections upon the History of the Creation in the book of Genesis : a Discourse delivered at Warrington, August 19, 1821.

Though it was impossible that these *Reflections* should be approved by many, into whose hands they fell, and notwithstanding they called forth some strictures, I yet regard the sermon as *expository*, rather than *controversial*.

The writer has attempted to elucidate a most interesting portion of the Jewish Scriptures: with what effect, learned and candid and studious readers have the means of judging.

2. The epistles of Paul the Apostle translated, with an Exposition and Notes, 4 vols. 8vo. 1822.

In the same year, copies of this work, in two vols. 4to. were delivered to Subscribers, but were not offered for sale.

3. The New Testament in an Improved Version, upon the Basis of Archbishop Newcome's New Translation, with a corrected Text, and Notes Critical and Explanatory, 8vo. and 12mo.

The volume in the smaller size has no doctrinal notes, but only a few remarks, which concern the text and the various readings.

This work has passed through at least five editions.

(IV.) BIOGRAPHICAL.

Memoirs of the late Reverend Theophilus Lindsey, M. A. including a brief Analysis of his Works, &c. 1812.

[A new and corrected edition was published in 1820.]

Mr. Belsham was an occasional contributor to *Monthly* publications; sometimes, to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in which his communications were duly and respectfully inserted by the Editor—but much more frequently in the *Monthly Repository*. He scarcely ever wrote under an assumed signature; because his papers have reference, in general, to his own publications,—to his theological opponents and to himself. To specify those papers, makes no part of my present design.

In the year 1828, Mr. Belsham gave directions that, after his death, his manuscripts should be placed in the hands of *The Rev. John Williams*, of Mansfield.

No. XV.—p. 20.

On “The Importance of Truth, and the Duty of making an open profession of it.” pp. 31, 32—42, 43.

No. XVI.—p. 22.

“The Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind,” and the “Summary of the Evidence, &c.” were each an epitome of some of Mr. Belsham's Academical Lectures. They are to be considered, therefore, in reference to their design, as well as to their execution. In every view, they are works of great merit and value.

No. XVII.—p. 23.

The mutual friendship of Dr. Priestley and Mr. Belsham, was built on their common attachment to the most interesting of human studies and pursuits, the harmony of their views on points of very high importance, and their strong perception of each other's characteristic excellencies. It was a subject of no ordinary satisfaction to the survivor that he lived to witness some tardy acts of justice rendered towards the name of his once venerated associate, which is now gathering—although it has not yet “gathered—all its fame:”

“ At ultimi nepotes,
 Et cordatior ætas,
 Judicia rebus æquiora forsitan
 Adhibebit, integro sinu.
 Tum, livore sepulto,
 Si quid meremur, sana posteritas sciet.”

To vindicate that fame, Mr. Belsham came forward zealously, ably and effectually. I look upon his labours in respect of “the controversy with Bishop Horsley,” as having been completely successful. He admits that in some minor articles of discussion Dr. Priestley was mistaken and inadvertent: he shows that the Prelate himself fell into a few capital errors, as to the meaning and the construction of certain Greek words; and he proves that Dr.

Priestley has intrenched himself in an impregnable fortress, with regard to his main positions, and the grand article and object of the controversy.

The following lines I transcribe from the 2nd. edition of *Hutton's Philosophical and Mathematical Dictionary*, [Article *Priestley*] where a correspondent of the author thus addresses him :—

“ I beg you will insert the following faithful portrait of a man whose character has been grossly misrepresented by interested enemies, and misconceived by a deluded public.—He was a patient, indefatigable, acute and judicious experimental philosopher; a candid, bold, and unguarded disputant in theology; a sincere and zealous Christian; a serious and rational preacher of the practical morality of religion—but without the least pretension to, or affectation of, oratorical ornaments. His mind embraced the whole extent of knowledge and literature in his closet: but in the affairs of the world, he was a plain, uninformed, unaccomplished, honest man. What he believed to be true he thought it his duty to propagate, without any regard to his own interest or the prejudices of mankind; but being overpowered by calumny and oppression, he was compelled to seek a residence among strangers, and leave his principles and character to the impartial judgment of posterity.”

No. XVIII.—p. 25.

The "Plea for Infant Baptism," is urged in Letters addressed, by Mr. Belsham, to his intimate friend, the late Rev. William Broadbent, of Latchford, near Warrington, whom he survived almost two years. Mr. Broadbent was, for a long term, assistant tutor in Coward's Academy, first at Daventry, and afterwards at Northampton: in the former of these towns, I was one of his pupils; and among the delightful reminiscences of past years, there are few which I more gladly cherish than what are associated with Mr. Broadbent's name—the recollections of his kindness of temper, frankness of manners, and consistent and exemplary character.

Perhaps there are not many theological inquirers, (and Mr. Broadbent was of that class) who, at some period, have not entertained doubts concerning *baptism*—its perpetuity, mode and subjects. The controversies on it, have been voluminous, and—what is yet worse—rancorous and bitter. I will not say any thing further of them here, except that a personal study of the Scriptures and of the History of the Christian Church, is better calculated than the perusal of such polemical works to satisfy, without irritating, the mind. On the side of those who contend that baptism is not a Christian rite, I know nothing comparable to Barclay's reasoning, in his justly famous *Apology* [Prop. xii.]: for Pædobaptism, the late Rev. John Palmer's and Mr.

Belsham's tracts, may safely be recommended : and so on behalf of Anti-pædo Baptism may the Rev. William Foot's Letters.

No. XIX.—p. 25.

The "Calm Inquiry, &c." contains a lucid, methodical, copious, and, I think, dispassionate and impartial, statement of the expositions of passages of Scripture by various annotators. That method of studying and teaching doctrinal Theology, is a vast improvement on the *systematical* mode, such as we find in Doddridge's Lectures, &c.—where reputed Orthodoxy is made the subject of alleged *Propositions* and *Demonstrations*; while *Scholia* and *Lemmas* are deemed good enough for sentiments considered as opposed to Orthodoxy. But the best, and, I must be of opinion, the only proper, way of learning and teaching Theology, is the analytical examination of the Original Scriptures, in a pure text, *without note or comment*.

No. XX.—p. 26.

The Unitarian Book Society in London, requested the several ministers, who were members of it, to communicate what remarks they judged proper on Archbishop

Newcome's New Translation, &c.: many of them, accordingly, transmitted their suggestions; though only two individuals, one of whom was the late Rev. Joseph Bretland, continued their observations on *the whole* of the Primate's work. Mr. Belsham drew up the intelligent and able *Introduction*, together with the notes, and carried the volume through the press. On the representation of two of his former pupils, he framed and superintended the edition in duodecimo; in which doctrinal notes are purposely omitted. What assistance he received, and from what quarter, in preparing a subsequent edition, he has related, in his Funeral Sermon for the late Rev. Thomas B. Broadbent, pp. 8, 9.

In his *Memoirs of Lindsey* (1812) pp. 458, &c. he ably refutes many of the objections brought against the *Improved Version*, and states the reasons of it's being formed on the basis of Archbishop Newcome's posthumous work. Let every man weigh those reasons, and, for himself, determine on their justness. In addition to what Mr. Belsham has said, I may remark, that the distinguished care and judgment, with which the Primate has applied Dr. Symonds's most excellent corrections of some of the phraseology, and much of the grammatical construction, in the Received Version, rendered it particularly desirable to have such a *basis* of a *version* that was to be yet further *improved*; each of those two writers being eminently characterised by learning, good sense and taste.

No. XXI.—p. 27.

Of this work, perhaps the most laborious in which Mr. Belsham engaged, the execution varies. I greatly prefer the *translation* and the *notes* to the *paraphrase*, which, not seldom, appears too long and diffuse, has an air too modern, and sometimes leaves us doubtful whether we are listening to the sense of the apostle, or only to the comments of his expositor. Still, the candour and ingenuousness, with which the annotations of writers of differing theological schools are given, merit cordial praise. I deliver my opinion of these volumes with a perfect esteem of Mr. Belsham's memory, and under a consciousness of my own fallibility. Yet I must express my wish that they had been formed still more closely on the model of *Locke's Paraphrase, &c.*: they would be amended, I humbly think, by an abridgement.

No. XXII.—p. 27.

Extracts from the writings of divines of high rank and celebrity, were, accordingly, made and published, either by Mr. Belsham, or by one of his most intimate friends, with the view of establishing the fact, which I have stated.

One instance of agreement, which those Extracts, I believe, do not comprehend, regards *the Judaical observance of the first day of the week*. The language which fell from Mr. Belsham on that topic, in his review of Wilberforce's Treatise, gave considerable offence, and perhaps might fairly and advantageously have been qualified: yet the sentiment, intrinsically sound, was not merely the sentiment of Calvin, Institutes, &c. B. ii. ch. viii. §. 32, &c. but, further, of Ogden, Sermons on the Ten Commandments, No. 7 and 8; Paley, Moral Philosophy, B. v. c. vi. &c. and a numerous band of divines of the Church of England.

No. XXIII.—p. 28.

That Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah, and that whoever acknowledges him to be such is, so far, a Christian, are the propositions which Locke has undertaken to prove, in his "Reasonableness of Christianity," and which he has there satisfactorily demonstrated. Here then is common and Scriptural ground, on which Christians, of *all* inferior denominations, may, and should, meet each other. Unhappily, the day has not yet arrived for the majority of them to admit these statements, and to act upon this principle. Meanwhile, the well-informed Unitarian Christian, reposes with humble confidence on

the stability of the *basis*, which Locke has so clearly illustrated; and, amidst reproaches, denunciations and invectives, which are little honourable to an age and country professing to be enlightened, he hence gains his persuasion, that "he, too, is of Christ."

The comparison of Scripture with Scripture, was Locke's grand principle of interpretation: he has admirably developed it in his "Essay for the better understanding of Paul's epistles." That principle Mr. Belsham approved and exercised.

No. XXIV.—p. 28.

Protestantism is neither more nor less than a *protest*, in practice as well as judgment, against human authority in spiritual concerns. Whether we view it historically or argumentatively, Protestantism is a principle, and not a set of notions. There are those who speak and write of *the doctrines of the Reformation*: if they mean, the doctrines which the Reformers embraced, as the result of their protest against Man's authority in religion, the language is intelligible and consistent;—if they mean, doctrines which have the *authority* of the Reformers, they obviously employ language irreconcilable with genuine Protestantism.

It is hence easy to perceive, why such a man as Mr. Belsham was an advocate of the relief of "his Catholic fellow-subjects." See *Memoirs of Lindsey*, p. 175, note.

No. XXV.—p. 29.

There are portions of the "*Memoirs of Lindsey*," which may be especially recommended to the reader. The account of Sir George Saville's speech, from Dr. Furneaux's notes, p. 57, of the first ed. that of the Rev. Edward Pickard [by marriage, Mr. Belsham's uncle], 63, of Robert Newton, Esq. of Norton house, 99, of Mr. and Mrs. Rayner, 119, and of Bishop John Law, 163, together with the contents of the Appendix, have great merit and interest.

The biographer has interspersed some admirable statements, in his best manner, of metaphysical and theological reasonings. He excelled in occasional sketches of character: that of the Rev. E. Pickard is an instance. Other examples may be seen in others of his works.

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